Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

Four political objectives
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order
* National reconsolidation
* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
* Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives
* Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
* Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
* Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
* The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives
* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt sends message of congratulations to Kingdom of Spain

YANGON, 19 April—General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to His Excellency Mr Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero on his assumption of office as Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Spain. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt sends message of congratulations to Kingdom of Spain

Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects preparations in the mess of Nyaunghnapinkwin, venue of National Convention. — MNA

Work coordination meeting of National Convention Convening Commission, Work Committee and Management Committee held

YANGON, 19 April — A work coordination meeting of the National Convention Convening Commission, Work Committee and Management Committee was held in the Pyidaungsu Hall in Nyaunghnapinkwin in Hmauby Township this morning.

Present were Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the commission. Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe, members of the Work Committee, Chairman of Management Committee Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lun Maung and members. Joint Secretary of the National Convention Convening Commission Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint of the Ministry of Defence acted as master of ceremonies.

Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein delivered an address. He said it was the second meeting of the National Convention Convening Commission, Work Committee and Management Committee to discuss work done, being done and to be done relating to the National Convention. The first meeting was held in the Pyidaungsu Hall in Kyaukkaon Grounds on 16 February 2004. Regarding the National Convention, tasks to be undertaken were laid down and duties were assigned, he said.

Tasks on the National Convention laid down at the first meeting were implemented and measures were also undertaken. The National Convention will be held at Nyaunghnapinkwin on 17 May 2004 and there is only a month left to hold the National Convention, he said. Within a month, he said, the commission, work committee and management committee are to discuss work done and being done and measures to be taken when the National Convention is in progress. After accepting the guidance of high-ranking officials of the State, necessary buildings such as Convention hall, meeting halls for group discussion, hostels the mess, hospital, gymnasiums, canttens and recreation centres were constructed in Nyaunghnapinkwin.

Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein makes a speech at the coordination meeting of the NCCC, Work Committee and Management Committee. — MNA

Embrace of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Build new roads and bridges for regional development

The Government of Myanmar has been taking measures for speedy development of education, health and social sectors by implementing the plan for development of border areas and national races, the 24-region development plan and the five rural development tasks.

Smooth and easy transport is the sine qua non for the development of a region. The better the transportation is, the more improved the education, health and social conditions of people in a region will be. Therefore, the Government is giving top priority to the task of improving transportation in all states and divisions.

Rakhine State is a region rich in natural resources. In the past, it was difficult for the people of Rakhine State to travel from one place to another because we had to depend mainly on air and water transport. But now, transportation between Rakhine State and other states and divisions has improved as new motor roads have been built.

The Yangon-Sittway Union Highway was completed in the year 2000. As a result, local people of Rakhine State can easily travel from Sittway to Yangon and other states and divisions. Now, the Kyaukphyu-Maei-Taungup and the Maei-An motor road are under construction. Moreover, new roads and bridges in the state are being constructed. The Nayikkan bridge on the Yangon-Sittway Union Highway was inaugurated on 17 April and the opening ceremony was attended by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence.

Rakhine State is abundant in land and water resources. Moreover, an enormous deposit of natural gas has been found there. If natural resources in the state can be fully explored, it can become a region where the State can depend on economically. Therefore, we would like to urge all the local people and departmental personnel to cooperate in the construction of new roads and bridges for the development of their region.

Review meeting on
(from page 16)

Afterwards, members of Water Treatment Plant Construction Work Committee reported on tasks being carried out and tasks to be done by Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin. In response to the reports, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin gave necessary instructions to officials concerned and the meeting came to a close. — MNA

People’s Desire

* Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
* Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
* Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
* Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

PyinOoLwin invitational golf tournament held

YANGON, 19 April — Prize presentation ceremony for the 46th PyinOoLwin invitational golf tournament and the first leg of Myanmar Golf Tour, organized by Myanmar Golf Federation and PyinOoLwin Golf Club was held at PyinOoLwin Golf Club on 15 April evening.

In gold medal level, Rector of Defence Services Technological Academy Brig-Gen Win Myint presented the first prize to YCDC team with 445 strokes and the second to PyinOoLwin team in the team event; the first prize to Soe Kyaw Naing (Pan-West) with 287 strokes, the second to Zaw Zaw Latt (Pan-West) with total 291 strokes and the third to Aung Win (YCDC) with 295 strokes in professional event. Next, Vice-President of PyinOoLwin Golf Club Brig-Gen Tun Ye presented the first prize to Zaw Zaw Win (YCDC) with 287 strokes, the second to Than Naing Oo (Forestry) with 300 strokes and the third to Naing Oo (Forestry) with 300 strokes and the third to Naing Oo (Forestry) with 300 strokes.

Winning tournament, 287 strokes and the third to Naing Oo (Forestry) with 300 strokes.

PyinOoLwin Golf Club for

Stooges were Maruman, PyinOoLwin Golf Club and Board of Directors of Golf Club Col Myint Aung. The 300-foot-long bridge is situated in PyinOoLwin team in the 46th PyinOoLwin Golf Club Col Myint Aung.

MPGA, Director of KM Golf Centre Daw Aye Aye Tint, MPGA, Director of KM Golf Centre Daw Aye Aye Tint, 3rd Vice-President of the PyinOoLwin Golf Club Col Myint Aung. The 300-foot-long bridge is situated in PyinOoLwin team in the 46th PyinOoLwin Golf Club Col Myint Aung.

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Eleven US troops killed in Iraq in one day

US death toll in Iraq reaches 700

BAGHDAD, 19 April—US troop deaths in Iraq reached 700, with 504 killed in combat, on Sunday as the military added 11 American casualties to the war’s death toll.

There were 99 US soldiers killed in Iraq in April — and an eleventh soldier died in a tank rollover, the military said.

The deaths brought to 99 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since April 1. Two Iraqi civilians were killed in a guerrilla rocket barrage in Baghdad, the US military said Sunday.

In the far-western city of Husaybah, five Marines were killed during a daylight firefight waged after a Marine patrol was ambushed Saturday morning by insurgents with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Helicopter-backed reinforcements also came under heavy rifle and rocket-propelled grenade fire from as many as 150 guerrillas, who fought through the night and into Sunday, according to a release from the 1st Marine Division. Marines killed 25 to 30 insurgents in the battle, leaving an unknown number wounded, the release said.

Spain to withdraw troops from Iraq

MAHINDRANAGAR, 19 April—The Prime Minister ordered Spanish troops pulled out of Iraq as soon as possible Sunday, fulfilling a campaign pledge to a nation still recovering from terrorist bombings that left 191 people three days earlier, by backing the train terrorist bombing, which killed 191

Jose Maria Aznar had provoked commuter allegations that outgoing Prime Minister Zapatero pledged to remove Spanish troops against 120 to 150 insurgents.

The new Socialist Prime Minister issued the abrupt recall just hours after his government was sworn in, saying there was no sign the United States would meet his demands for staying in Iraq—United Nations control of the postwar occupation.

Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s party won the March 14 general election amid allegations that outgoing Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar had provoked commuter train terrorist bombing, which killed 191 people three days earlier, by backing the train terrorist bombing, which killed 191

However, she said the Philippine contingent will remain in Iraq and coordinate all actions with the US-led coalition forces and the Iraqi authorities.

Currently, there are only 43 Filipino soldiers and eight policemen left in Iraq out of its original 96-member humanitarian contingent.

In the past several days, scores of foreign hostages were held in Iraq, including a Filipino driver who were held briefly and then released.

However, an Iranian diplomat and an Italian captive were murdered by Iraqi rebels in a bid allegedly to push the US-led forces out of the country.

Arroyo wants “zero casualty” for Filipinos in Iraq

MANILA, 19 April—Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said Friday she wants all Filipinos in Iraq to be safe and unharmed as concerns over the safety of foreign nationals working in Iraq are mounting.

“We want a ‘zero-casualty’ goal for Filipino civilians and peacekeepers as tension continuously escalates in Iraq. All government agencies and the public should support this aim,” the Presidential Palace quoted Arroyo as saying in a statement.

“We will stand by our international commitments and we will make sure our nationals are safe,” Arroyo said.

Zapatero pledged to remove Spanish troops in his winning campaign. But his announcement — a setback for the United States — was a bombshell, coming just hours after his government was sworn in, and as his foreign minister planned to travel to Washington to discuss the dispute.

In a five-minute address at the Moncloa Palace, Zapatero said he had ordered Defense Minister Jose Bono to “do what is necessary for the Spanish troops stationed in Iraq to return home in the shortest time possible.”

Zapatero cited his campaign pledge to bring the 1,300 troops in Iraq home by June 30, when their mandate expires, if the United Nations failed to take political and military control of the situation.

“With the information we have, and which we have gathered over the past few weeks, it is not foreseeable that the United Nations will adopt a resolution” that satisfies Spain’s terms, Zapatero said.

Also, the latest poll showed 72 percent of Spaniards wanted the troops withdrawn.

Spain sees car sales growth in 1st quarter

BANGKOK, 19 April—Thailand witnessed a strong growth of 24 percent of vehicle sales in the first quarter of this year backed by rising confidence in economy and low interest rates.

As the first quarter ending March, total car sales in the kingdom rose to 147,585 units, rising 23.9 percent from the same period over last year, the newspaper Business Day on Friday quoted a Toyota Motor (Thailand) statement as saying.

For the month of March, sales rose by 30.6 percent year-on-year to 54,418 units while the total vehicle sales stood at 49,044 units in February, according to the Toyota statement.

The bright prospect of vehicle sales in the first quarter reflected the unrest situation in southern Thailand and the bird flu epidemic had little impact over Thai economy, Toyota Motor (Thailand) Vice-President Vudthikorn Suriyachantananon was quoted as saying. He also noted that the other main reason for the sharp growth of sales in March was the 25th Bangkok International Motor Show which offered special promotion price to consumers.

The 10-day event, ending in early April, generated 14 billion baht (about 333 US dollars) in sales, or 17 percent more than last year, with over 13,000 vehicles sold.

US soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment of the First Infantry Division patrol near a bridge over the Euphrates river near Najaf on 18 April, 2004. — Internet

US soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment of the First Infantry Division patrol on a bridge crossing the Euphrates river near the holy city of Najaf on 18 April, 2004. — Internet

99 US soldiers in Iraq killed in April

BAGHDAD, 19 April—Ten US troops were killed on Saturday in combat across Iraq — including five US Marines killed in pitched battles near the Syrian border — and an eleventh soldier died in a tank rollover, the military said.

The deaths brought to 99 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since April 1. Two Iraqi civilians were killed in a guerrilla rocket barrage in Baghdad, the US military said Sunday.

In the far-western city of Husaybah, five Marines were killed during a daylight firefight waged after a Marine patrol was ambushed Saturday morning by insurgents with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Helicopter-backed reinforcements also came under heavy rifle and rocket-propelled grenade fire from as many as 150 guerrillas, who fought through the night and into Sunday, according to a release from the 1st Marine Division. Marines killed 25 to 30 insurgents in the battle, leaving an unknown number wounded, the release said.

Also Saturday, three US Army soldiers travelling in a 1st Armoured Division convoy were killed when their convoy came under fire near the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniyah on Saturday evening, the military said.

The 1st Armoured Division is based in Germany.

Another US soldier was killed Saturday morning when a roadside bomb exploded near a military convoy in Baghdad, the military said. The soldier was from Task Force Baghdad, which is made up mostly of troops from the Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division.

Separately, a US Marine from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was also killed in action in western Iraq, the Marines said, giving no further details.

Also Saturday, a US Army soldier was killed and two others were injured when their Abrams tank rolled over in northern Baghdad. The military did not say whether the rollover occurred during combat, and did not specify the soldiers’ unit.

Internet

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua
Two British soldiers hurt in Iraq

LONDON, 19 April — Two British soldiers have been injured after their convoy was ambushed in southeast Iraq, the Ministry of Defence says. The men were shot during an attack on a joint British Army and Civil Defence Corps convoy late on Saturday near the town of Amara.

“Their injuries are not life-threatening,” an MoD spokesman said on Sunday. He denied media reports that “fierce fighting” was raging around the town.

The soldiers’ personal details and regiments will not be released.

Britain has the second biggest military force in Iraq after the United States. There are around 10,000 British troops in Iraq, most around the southern city of Basra.

Six British soldiers were killed and eight injured last June in two separate incidents near Amara after what the British army called a “misunderstanding” with locals over weapons searches. — Internet

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Japanese, oppose US Iraq policy

TOKYO, 19 April — Most Japanese were supportive of government’s handling of the latest hostage crisis but opposed to US policy on Iraq, the leading Asahi Shimbun said Saturday.

According to a Friday survey, 64 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with government’s rescuing efforts for three Japanese hostages. 73 per cent expressed their support for the decision not to withdraw the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) from Iraq, while 16 per cent criticized the stance.

The Iraqi kidnappers had demanded Japan pull the 500-strong troops out of Iraq in exchange for the hostages release, but handed them over on Thursday without the prerequisite being met. An earlier statement reportedly from the group said they had decided to release the three because they were not supporters of the US in Iraq.

The survey result may help embolden Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to go on with his hardline policy.

Those who opposed US policy on Iraq stood at 71 per cent, a sharp contrast to supporters declining dramatically from the 21 per cent in January to 12 per cent in the paper survey taken a week earlier.

As for whether the troops should remain there, 50 per cent of the respondents held favourable view, and 32 per cent wanted them back, arguing the SDF would be involved in combat or the dispatch was illegal from the very beginning.

A legislation adopted in July authorized the operation, but confined the activities in non-combat areas. Critics maintain that the law is in violation of Japan’s pacifist Constitution.

MNA/Xinhua

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Five US Marines killed in Iraq

BAQOOS, 19 April — A US newspaper said on Sunday that five US Marines and dozens of Iraqis had been killed in a 14-hour battle close to the Syrian border.

At least nine Marines were wounded and more than 20 Iraqi fighters captured and taken to the main Marine base near the western town of al-Quaim.

Marines based in al-Anbar province west of Baghdad — which includes towns like Falluja and Ramadi — face fierce resistance from Sunni Muslim insurgents fighting the occupation. — Internet

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Iraqi resistance releases the two remaining Japanese held hostage in Iraq

on 17 April, 2004. — Internet

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Anti-war protesters at Blair’s doorstep

LONDON, 19 April — About 200 anti-war protesters rallied outside the London residence of British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Saturday, chanting “end the occupation”.

They gathered under a banner proclaiming: “Iraq for the Iraqis”. Protester Andrew Burgin of the Stop the War Coalition, which helped organize the demonstration, said: “We are calling for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops in Iraq.”

MNA/Reuters

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IDB President urges modernization of Latin America

MONTREUX, 19 April — Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) President Enrique Iglesias said here on Friday that it is necessary to modernize the economic structure, social policies and political system in Latin America.

“I do not believe that the region is lacking leaders who are up to the task of meeting the enormous challenges we now face,” he said.

Iglesias said at a meeting with Uruguayan officials.

He indicated that Latin America may have difficulty in fulfilling the UN-proposed Millennium Objectives, which aim to reduce poverty by half before 2015.

The president said corruption has severely undermined the region’s economy. He also forecast that Uruguay’s economy may have difficulty in meeting the three per cent growth target set for the region.

MNA/Xinhua

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High-speed Internet boosts e-commerce in Canada

OTTAWA, 19 April — Expanding use of high-speed Internet connections helped e-commerce sales grow by 40 per cent last year, Statistics Canada reported Friday.

Private and public sector online sales in Canada jumped to 19.1 billion Canadian dollars (about 14.5 billion US dollars) last year, with private sector sales accounting for 18.6 billion Canadian dollars (about 13.5 billion US dollars) of the total. Online sales by public sector enterprises rebounded from a decline in 2002, jumping more than 56 per cent to 511.4 million Canadian dollars (about 390 million US dollars).

About 7 per cent of private sector firms sold goods or services online last year, virtually unchanged from 2002. These firms accounted for 29 per cent of gross business income in Canada. — MNA/Xinhua

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Relatives plead for lives of Italian hostages

Rome, 19 April — The families of three Italian security guards held hostage in Iraq pleaded with the kidnappers on Saturday to spare the men’s lives.

In a videotape appeal broadcast on the Arabic-language satellite TV channel Al Jazeera, the sister of one of the captives said the three men had only gone to Iraq to look for work and had no political agenda.

“We are simple people like yourselves. We appeal to your religious consciences as believers,” said Antonella Agliana, whose brother Maurizio was seized along with three other Italians outside Baghdad last Monday.

Two days later, the Iraqi kidnappers shot dead one of the four men and warned that they would kill the other captives if Italy refused to withdraw some 2,700 troops deployed in Iraq.

“We respect your God. We are afraid that what you are threatening to do will not serve the cause you support,” said Agliana, speaking on behalf of the other families.

“Our boys only went (to Iraq) to look for work without any ideological motives,” she added. “You, too, have families and you can understand our anguish. Spare the lives of our boys.”

The four Italians worked for a US-based security company. Colleagues said they served as bodyguards for foreign businessmen involved with the reconstruction of Iraq.

The murder of hostage Fabrizio Quattrocchi shocked Italy and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has said he is doing everything possible to secure the release of the remaining three captives.

Berlusconi has dispatched his special envoy Gianni Castellaneta to the Middle East to help resolve the crisis.

The envoy has held talks with Iranian leaders in Tehran and is expected to meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad soon. Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazia is due to fly to Italy on Sunday and will meet Berlusconi in Milan on Sunday evening. — MNA/Reuters

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Japan’s crude steel output hits 13-year high in 2003

Tokyo, 19 April — Crude steel output by Japanese steelmakers came to 110.98 million tons in fiscal 2003, topping 110 million for the first time in 13 years, an industry body said Friday.

The Japan Iron and Steel Federation said output for the year to March 31 represented a 1 per cent increase from the previous year and the fifth-largest amount ever logged.

Japanese steelmakers are running their steelworks at full factory utilization ratios amid growing signs of a rebounding economy, the federation noted.

The federation attributed the higher output partly to brisk exports, particularly to China.

In addition, strong domestic demand from the automobile, shipbuilding and industrial machinery industries has also resulted in brisk steel output in fiscal 2003, it said.

Steel output grew 1.9 per cent with thick steel sheets for use in ships enjoying particularly strong demand. Such thick steel output soared 14.9 per cent.

In contrast, steel bar output for use as construction material and other items shrank, the federation noted.

Output of specialty steel for use in automobiles jumped 7.2 per cent to a record 22.73 million tons.

MNA/Xinhua
Anti-US guerrillas disrupt Iraq road network

BAGHDAD, 19 April—Guerrillas blew up bridges over a main highway from Baghdad to southern Iraq, further disrupting the country’s battered transport system, witnesses said on Saturday.

They said debris from blasts targeting at least two bridges closed the Baghdad-Hilla Road, one of two highways leading to the port city of Basra.

The US-led administration said in a statement that two highways, including the Basra-Hill Route, were closed for security reasons and to halt guerrilla attacks against US forces and supply convoys.

The US military said it had no information about blasts targeting highway bridges.

A rebel leader who came from Hilla said: “The guerrillas are after US supply lines. American convoys are having to drive off the highway and go through rough terrain around the bridges.”

The military also closed another main highway leading north of Baghdad on Saturday.

Sunni and Shiite Muslim guerrillas in central and southern Iraq have severely disrupted the transport system, harmed trade, and restricted supply routes.

Iraq’s Oil Ministry has stopped importing gasoline through Syria, Jordan and the Gulf because of poor security along western and southern highways.

The western highway leading to Syria and Jordan is “dangerous.” The military also closed another main highway heading north of Baghdad on Saturday.

6.5 million pirated CDs destroyed in south China city

ZHOUZHI, 19 April—China destroyed 6.5 million pirated compact discs (CDs) here Friday, a move indicating its resolve to protect intellectual property rights.

The CDs were crushed at the Ningxi Culture Square in Zhouzhi, a coastal city in the southern province of Guangdong, which borders Macao Special Administrative Region.

Officer of Gongbei Customs of Zhouzhi have taken tough measures against smuggling of pirated CDs in recent years.

Statistics show that Gongbei Customs officers seized more than 25.23 million copies of illegal publications, including 24.56 million smuggled pirated CDs from 2000 to the end of March this year.— MNA/Xinhua

Sadr’s followers vow war if US attacks Najaf

SAQIYA, 19 April—At least four Iraqis were killed and 11 others injured in armed clashes near the Iraqi town of Kufa on Friday, witnesses said.

A US military convoy was attacked by radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mehdi Army while driving from Al Abbasia bridge east of Kufa, a stronghold of Sadr’s supporters near the southern city of Najaf, to a rural area between Kufa and Al Abbasia where clashes erupted, witness Muhsin Jawad told Xinhua.

Two armoured vehicles were damaged in the clashes and a US helicopter evacuated the American casualties, said Jawad, who earlier reported that a US convoy of two dozen armoured vehicles moved toward Abbasia in an apparent attempt to launch a strike at the city.

Also on Friday, fierce overnight clashes erupted between Spanish troops and Iraqi militants around Najaf, witnesses said in the city said. Sadr’s militia launched resistance attacks against occupying troops this month, inflicting heavy casualties on both sides.— MNA/Xinhua

At least four killed in Iraq’s Kufa clashes

BAGHDAD, 19 April—At least four Iraqis were killed and 11 others injured in armed clashes near the Iraqi town of Kufa on Friday, witnesses said.

A US military convoy was attacked by radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mehdi Army while driving from Al Abbasia bridge east of Kufa, a stronghold of Sadr’s supporters near the southern city of Najaf, to a rural area between Kufa and Al Abbasia where clashes erupted, witnessed by Muhsin Jawad told Xinhua.

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Also on Friday, fierce overnight clashes erupted between Spanish troops and Iraqi militants around Najaf, witnesses said in the city said. Sadr’s militia launched resistance attacks against occupying troops this month, inflicting heavy casualties on both sides.— MNA/Xinhua

Businessman on UAE passport abducted in Basra

BAGHDAD, 19 April—A Jordanian-born businessman traveling on a United Arab Emirates passport was abducted in Iraq’s southern city of Basra five days ago, an official with the US-led coalition authorities said on Friday.

Wael Mamduh arrived in Basra two months ago, the official said. There were no other details.

At least 40 foreigners have been abducted in Iraq in recent weeks. Most have been released, after appeals from Sunni and Shiite clerics for guerrillas not to target foreign civilians. Three Czechs and one Canadian were released on Friday. Several foreigners are still missing.— MNA/Xinhua

China to carry out resources saving campaign

BEIJING, 19 April—China has decided to carry out a nationwide campaign from 2004 to 2006 to promote resources saving by raising awareness and practices in energy, raw materials, water and land.

Premier Wen Jiabao had earlier said that it is of great significance to carry out such a campaign in a persistent, deep and all-round way.

Publicity and education to that end should also be widely conducted and all saving policies and measures should be enforced as required, said Wen.

He also required integration of the campaign with the general tasks of economic and social development.— MNA/Xinhua

Passengers in China will enjoy faster, comfortable trips by train

BEIJING, 19 April—Passengers in China will enjoy a faster, more comfortable trips by train as the country’s rail network will put up steam on 18 April, reported China Daily on Saturday.

The large-scale acceleration on railway transportation will enable passenger trains to run at a speed of 65.7 kilometres per hour and a top speed of 200 kilometres per hour along a 7,500-kilometre-long network, said Hu Yadong, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Railway.

The freight trains would also run faster, said Hu.

Among the passenger trains, the speed of direct express trains will reach 119.2 kilometres per hour and 92.8 kilometres per hour on the average.

This is the fifth time China has moved to speed up its trains since 1997. As of Sunday, 19 pairs of new express trains, to be marked with “Z” on the schedule, will run from the departure station to the destinations without a single stop on route.— MNA/Xinhua

Natural disasters cause huge eco losses in Jiangxi Province

NANTECHU, 19 April—East China’s Jiangxi Province incurred heavy economic losses of up to seven billion yuan (843 million US dollars) from devastating natural disasters in 2003, nearly 4.4 billion yuan (525 million US dollars) of which were sustained by the agricultural sector.

From April to June 2003, six strong gales, cyclones, and heavy rain hit Jiangxi, leading to flooding in 46 counties with rainfall exceeding 100 millimetres in 24 hours. Then the province suffered a drought from July to December, with an average rainfall of 32 millimetres, the most severe situation since 1951.

The calamities affected 1.54 million hectares of farm land, involving 30 million people, 163,000 of whom were forced to resettle.

More than 70,000 houses were pulled down, depriving three million people and 1.1 million heads of livestock of sufficient water supply.— MNA/Xinhua

Sadr’s followers vow war

SADR'S FOLLOWERS VOW WAR IF US ATTACKS NAJAF

AL-MASSIRA, 19 April—Moqtada al-Sadr’s core supporters vowed on Friday there would be all-out war if US forces stormed Najaf, saying Iraq’s Shiite Muslims would not let another of their leaders be killed with impunity.

A 2,500-strong US force is poised near the holy city of Najaf to kill or capture the young cleric, but has not yet attacked the city. The chances of peaceful compromise appeared to dim after Sadr vowed not to disarm his Mehdi army militia.

“You Americans, do not fall into a quagmire and storm Najaf. Rivers of your blood will flow,” Sheikh Nasser al-Saedi told tens of thousands of Sadr’s followers near the southern city of Najaf, to a rural area between Kufa and Al Abbasia where clashes erupted, witnessed by Muhsin Jawad told Xinhua.

Three Czechs and one Canadian were released on Friday. Several foreigners are still missing.— MNA/Xinhua

A US soldier keeps guard over suspected Mahdi militiamen, who sit detained at an US army base on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, Thursday, 17 April 2004.— Reuters

A US soldier keeps guard over suspected Mahdi militiamen, who sit detained at an US army base on the outskirts of Najaf, Iraq, Thursday, 17 April 2004. — Reuters
Iraq devoid of sovereignty under foreign occupation
Images to be viewed from true perspective

Wounded two year old Iraqi boy Ali Abdullah is carried by his father to a clinic after he was hurt by an overnight blast that destroyed their neighbour’s home in the besieged town of Falluja on 11 April 2004.

A wounded nine-year-old Iraqi girl Ahlam Su’ad, who was shot in the neck, is cared for by medical staff at a small clinic in the embattled town of Falluja April 8, 2004.

Wounded one and a half year old Iraqi baby Qusay Issam, who was shot in the arm in the besieged town of Falluja, is treated in Baghdad’s al-Nouman hospital, on 13 April, 2004.

An Iraqi woman, right, cries next to the bed of her 3-year-old son Ali Majeed, left, at the al-Kindy hospital in Baghdad Iraq on 5 April, 2004. The boy was shot in the shoulder during an exchange of fire between US soldiers and armed militiamen while playing in his house in Sadr City, the largest Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad.

Nura, 3, an Iraqi child wounded during fighting between US forces and Iraqi guerrillas is rushed into a public clinic by her father in Falluja, Iraq on 8 April, 2004.

A young girl lies in a hospital after she was injured in clashes in Falluja, on 10 April, 2004.
Youngsters enjoying peace and happiness throughout Myanmar

Human resources the future nation can rely

School children show their computer skills at the ceremony to mark 2003-2004 academic year School Family Day.

Children from No 4 Pre-primary School, Ahlon Township, present dances to the audience at the Myanmar Traditional Water Festival.

At the opening of School Family Day of 2003-2004 academic year, students present Kayin traditional dance to the audience.

New generation Karatedo training conducted by Sports and Physical Education Department during the summer holidays.

New generation Wushu athletes demonstrate their skill at Yankin Education Practising School.

Youth taking part in tennis training conducted by Sports and Physical Education Department at Theibyu Tennis Plaza.
Work coordination meeting...

He said the National Convention will be held in accordance with the procedures on holding of the National Convention announced by the National Convention Convening Commission and six objectives of the National Convention. He urged the work committee and management committee to make necessary arrangements for the convenience of the delegates.

Secretary of National Convention Convening Commission Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan reported on invitation sent to Brig-Gen Thein Sein and party inspected progress in preparations in Pyidaungsu Hall.

Chairman of NCCC Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party proceeded to the hotel for women delegates and inspected the meeting room, bed rooms, recreation hall and the mess hall.

Next, they looked into the GEC welfare shops, Winthuza shops of the Ministry of Industry 1. After that, Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party inspected beauty salon, photo studios, optical shops, public telephone booth, fax, E-mail and express mail services being opened there together with the welfare shops.

Later, the Secretary-2 and party arrived at the gymnasium and inspected construction of women’s fitness centre, men’s table tennis hall, men’s fitness centre, men’s table tennis hall, modern sports gear, arrangements being made for construction of badminton court.

Next, they arrived at the hospital being opened for the delegates and inspected patient wards, traditional medicine clinic, dental clinic, operation theatre, laboratory and medical store. After giving necessary instructions to officials, Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party left Nyaungshapinkwin at 11 am where the National Convention will be held.

The National Convention will be convened in Nyaungshapinkwin beginning 17 May 2004. Hence, the respective committees and sub-committees are making necessary preparations. Arrangements have been made for the delegates to hold discussions in Pyidaungsu Hall at the same time. The health sub-committee office is being opened in the basement of Pyidaungsu Hall, the financial sub-committee on the first floor, the information sub-committee and the decoration sub-committee on the second floor and office of the National Convention Convening Management Committee on the third floor. Altogether 39 hostels for the delegates have already been built.

In each hostel there are eight bedrooms each of which can accommodate four delegates and each bedroom is provided with a bathroom and toilet. Each bedroom has been facilitated with TV and VCD.

The delegates of political parties will hold discussions in Room-1 of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Office, the delegates of the representative elects in Room-2, the delegates of peasants in Room-4, the delegates of workers in Room-5, the delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia in Room-6, the delegates of State service personnel in Room-7 and other invited delegates in Room-8. The delegates of national races will hold discussions in Room-3 on the right side of Pyidaungsu Hall.

Shops are kept open at Nyaungshapinkwin to enable the delegates to the National Convention to buy household utensils, foodstuff, stationery and other general goods at affordable prices.

At the shop of Yangon Division Government Employees Cooperatives (GEC), books and periodicals, consumers’ goods, general items, textiles, clothes, various kinds of books and periodicals and stationery.

(see page 9)
Work coordination…

(Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commission)

Fifth, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min explained matters related to combined tasks with departments concerned for work site safety in construction of the Parami overpass. Next, All Bus Line of Control Committee (Yangon Division) Chairman Brig-Gen Myint Swe (Rtd) and Col Myo Myint of Parami Bus Line reported on matters pertaining to changing the routes of passenger bus lines and using Wayzayanta Road as a temporary road where buses will run. Chief Engineer U Tin Aung reported on changing of power lines.

"Next, Deputy Minister U Pe Than reported on construction of Parami flyover, measures to be taken for temporary closure of Parami Road between Kaba Aye Pagoda and Wayzayanta Road during the construction and arrangements for entry and exit of cars in the construction area. Those present took part in the discussions. Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin discussed the assistance to be rendered by YCDC for timely completion of the project.

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of representatives-elect — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of service personnel — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of workers — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for other invited delegates — MNA

Donate blood

Commander, minister meet entrepreneurs of Ayethaya Industrial Zone

(Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commission)

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe said there frequently occurs traffic congestion as the level crossing where Parami road crosses the circular railroad at the border of South Okkalapa Township and Yaninkhin Township has to be closed while the circular trains pass. Upgrading tasks are being carried out to make Yangon City Passenger Class characterize the city of international level. The tasks include upgrading the roads into six-lane ones, renovation and painting and other upgrading tasks. The commander said new flyovers are being built at the level crossings in Yangon. He then called on concerted efforts of departmental officials for timely completion of Parami overpass construction project. Parami overpass will be 742.5 feet long and 48 feet wide. It will have pedestrian lanes on both sides and it is of reinforced concrete type. On completion, the overpass can withstand 60-ton loads and its clearance is 14-feet high. The overpass will be constructed by the engineering team of the Myanmar Railways in six months. — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia — MNA

Map showing the location of Parami Overpass:

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Tuesday, 20 April, 2004

Roads of bus lines to be changed temporarily

(Yangon, 19 April—As Parami overpass is being constructed, Parami road between Wayzayanta Road and Kaba Aye Pagoda Road will be temporarily closed to traffic beginning 21 April. The routes of passenger bus lines will be changed as follows.

The bus numbers 49 (Green) and 201 will not reach Nandawun market. Instead, they will use Kaba Aye Pagoda Road via Kanbe Traffic Point. The bus numbers 49 (Yellow), 219 and 210 will not go to Bailey Bridge. Instead, they will go along Kaba Aye Pagoda Road via Kanbe Traffic Point. The bus numbers 36 will ply along Wayzayanta Road and then they will turn into Kaba Aye Pagoda Road from Gandama Road. Instead of going along the road leading to Nandawun market, the bus numbers 43 (Green) will drive along Kaba Aye Pagoda Road via Kanbe Traffic Point. For the Parami bus lines such as 173, 174, 176, 179, 180 and 182, they will go along Wayzayanta Road and turn into Kaba Aye Pagoda Road from Gandama Road. — MNA

Construction of Parami Overpass coordinated

(Yangon, 19 April—Overpass construction work committee, part of the work committee for beautifying the Yangon City and construction, held a coordination meeting on construction of Parami flyover at the briefing hall of the Parami flyover construction project site this afternoon.

Present at the meeting were Chairman the work committee for beautifying the Yangon City and construction Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commission of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Deputy Ministers for Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin and U Pe Than, No 2 Military Region Command Chairman Brig-Gen Myo Muntin, Yangon City Mayor U Min Swe and departmental heads, Yangon East District PDC Chairman Lt-Col Maung Maung Shein and guests.

First, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min explained matters related to combined tasks with departments concerned for work site safety in construction of the Parami overpass. Next, All Bus Line of Control Committee (Yangon Division) Chairman Brig-Gen Myint Swe (Rtd) and Col Myo Myint of Parami Bus Line reported on matters pertaining to changing the routes of passenger bus lines and using Wayzayanta Road as a temporary road where buses will run. Chief Engineer U Tin Aung reported on changing of power lines.

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Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of representatives-elect — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of service personnel — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of workers — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for other invited delegates — MNA

Donate blood

Commander, minister meet entrepreneurs of Ayethaya Industrial Zone

(Yangon, 19 April—Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commission of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Khin Maung Maung and In Charge of Ayethaya Industrial Zone Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lwin Thein met with the entrepreneurs of the industrial zone at the meeting hall of the industrial zone in Taunggyi this morning.

At the meeting, the commander gave instructions, saying that new land plots in Taunggyi (East) if they come and work there. — MNA

Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia — MNA

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Preparations for the meeting hall for delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia — MNA

Donate blood
Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs and for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw inspected the construction of Nannya tower in Bagan-NyaungU of Mandalay Division on 17 April.

The minister also inspected the Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications in NnyaungU and gave instructions on installation of more telephone lines for public use.

The minister pro-ceeded to Hsinbyume in Magway Division, where the minister, together with Magway Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Col Zaw Min, formally opened the newly-constructed digital auto-exchange station.

The minister, together with Col Zaw Min, also opened the newly-constructed digital auto-exchange station in Salin, and they viewed round the station.

At 11:30 am, the minister and party arrived at Pwintbyu, where the minister, together with Col Zaw Min, also opened a new digital auto-exchange and viewed round it.

In the afternoon, the minister and party paid homage to State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Secretary Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara of Magway Maha Visotttara Monastery and offered provisions to the Sayadaw. They also attended to the requirements for construction works at the monastery. The minister and party also inspected Magway Hotel and Phankhunmay Hotel in the region.

On 18 April morning the minister overview posts and telecommunications services in Magway Division.

The minister went to Taungdwingyi, where he met with members of the pagoda board of trustees and engineers at Aungmyinyaza pagoda, which was under renovation, and attended to the requirements.

The minister also looked into posts and telecommunication services in Taungdwingyi and Aunglan townships.

Most Canadians plan to donate organs upon dying

OTTAWA, 19 April—Nearly 75 per cent of Canadians plan to donate at least one organ upon dying, according to a recent opinion poll. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents in the Leger Marketing survey said they had already taken the necessary measures to make their decisions known, while another 34 per cent said they would follow suit.

Seventeen per cent said they would not donate any organs while the remaining 20 per cent refused to answer.

The poll of 1,500 Canadians was conducted February 27-March 2. It is considered accurate within 2.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, when the entire sample is taken into account.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information released figures last week on organ procurement and said the rate of donations across the country continued to fall short of the need for transplants.

In 2003, 124 of every one million Canadians, or almost 4,000 people, were waiting for new organs.

Rantisi killing fuels EU dismay over Middle East

STRAFAN (Ireland), 19 April — The killing of a top Hamas leader rekindled European Union dismay over the Middle East crisis on Saturday, just hours after the bloc had struggled to put a positive spin on Israel’s course of action.

“Israel has a right to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks, but actions of this type are not only unlawful, they are not conducive to lowering tension.” EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said after Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi was killed in an Israeli missile strike. His comment was released in Ireland, where earlier EU foreign ministers had demanded “an awful lot of damage” that the EU would have to help repair.

“An awful lot of Palestinians will have taken the view as a result of this week that their aspirations for a two-state solution have been knocked on the head,” he said.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier, pigged that the United States had bypassed other members of the Quartet that sponsors the roadmap — Russia, the EU and the United Nations — to reach an agreement with Israel.

And the host of the meeting, Irish Foreign Minister Brian Cowen, said as the ministers gathered on Friday that Israel should make deals with its “enemies”, the Palestinians, rather than its friends in Washington.

In their statement, the ministers said the roadmap — which calls for a Palestinian state alongside Israel by 2005 — was the only way ahead and insisted that any final settlement must emerge from negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Arab League members reject new Mideast US policy

CAIRO, 19 April — The 22 members of the Arab League on Saturday rejected Washington’s new policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying it was a threat to security and stability in the Middle East.

At the request of Palestine, a full league statement said the United Nations General Assembly's condemnation Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi could lead to more violence in the Middle East.

The Secretary-General condemns Israel’s assassination of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi,” a spokesman for Annan said in a statement. “He reiterates that extrajudicial killings are violations of international law and calls on the government of Israel to immediately end this practice.” — MNA/Reuters

Annan condemns Rantisi killing

UNITED NATIONS, 19 April — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan condemned Israel's killing of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi on Saturday, saying the assassination

Bush said this week that Israel might be able to retain parts of the occupied West Bank and that Palestinian refugees should give up hope of regaining their homes in what is now Israel.

At the request of Palestine, a full league member, the Arab League held a special session in Cairo at permanent representative level on Saturday to respond to Bush.

“The council...affirmed unanimously that it rejects the new American position, which is likely to wreck the peace process in the Middle East,” an official statement said.

“This position encourages Israel to persist in its aggression against the Palestinian people and its threats to security and stability in the region,” it added. — MNA/Reuters

Rantisi killing fuels EU dismay over Middle East
Thai BOI attributes UNCTAD rating to new investment strategies

BANGKOK, 19 April — The Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI) has said that the United Nations’ recent rating of Thailand as the fourth most attractive investment location in the world was a direct result of its emphasis on science, technology and innovation (STI).

BOI secretary-general Somphong Wanapha was quoted on Sunday by the Thai News Agency as saying that the UN ranking was a recognition of the success of the BOI’s new investment strategies, and expressed confidence that the continuation of such strategies would lead to a huge influx of new investment.

It was reported at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) placed Thailand behind China, India and the United States as one of the most attractive investment locations in the world.

Woodward says Saudis learned of war plan before Powell

WASHINGTON, 19 April — US Secretary of State Colin Powell learned about President George W. Bush’s decision to go to war in Iraq after Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to the United States had already been informed, journalist Bob Woodward said on Sunday.

Woodward, author of a new book entitled, Plan of Attack, said in a CBS “60 Minutes” interview that Bush told national security leader Condoleezza Rice, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld first about his decision to go to war in January 2003. “He told Condi Rice. He told Rumsfeld. He knew Cheney wanted to do this. And they realized they haven’t told Colin Powell,” said Woodward, who described Powell as being opposed to the war.

But before Bush called Powell to the Oval Office, he gave Cheney and Rumsfeld permission to inform Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan about his decision for war. They even showed him a top-secret map of the war plan, Woodward said.

“They describe in detail the war plan for Bandar,” he told “60 Minutes” reporter Mike Wallace.

Bandar “says to Cheney and Rumsfeld, ‘So Saddam, this time is going to be out, period!’ And Cheney, who has said nothing, says the following: ‘Prince Bandar, once we start, Saddam is toast.’” Bush later confirmed to Bandar what Rumsfeld and Cheney had said, telling the Saudi royal: “Their message is my message.”

Bush learned about Bush’s decision for war after the Saudi ambassador, telling CBS “Face the Nation” on Sunday the Secretary of State was called to the White House to learn Bush’s feeling that diplomacy was not working. “I just can’t let this impression stand. The Secretary of State was privy to all of the conversations with the President, all of the briefings for the President,” she said.

But Woodward, who first earned fame in the early 1970s by helping to break open the Watergate scandal that led to President Richard Nixon’s resignation, presented details of the meeting between the President and his Secretary of State. “Powell says to him somewhat in a chilly way, ‘Are you aware of the consequences?’ because he’d been pounding for months on the President, on everyone — and Powell correctly says. ‘You know you’re going to be owning this place.’” And the President says, “I understand that.” In the end, Powell agreed to support the President’s decision for war. “And then the President says, ‘time to put your war uniform on’,” Woodward related.

ASEAN launches joint tourism programme

BANGKOK, 19 April — The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has launched a joint programme aimed at boosting intra-ASEAN tourism, getting ASEAN residents to visit more than one of the member countries for their holidays.

The ASEAN Tourism Promotion Council in Bangkok said that the so-called “ASEAN Hip-Hop Pass,” which will run until March 31, 2005, is a promotional programme offering competitive prices for intra-regional travel by citizens of the 10 ASEAN member countries, the Thai News Agency reported Sunday.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The programme involves air, hotel and tour passes, which can only be purchased in ASEAN countries. The air pass offers visits to at least two ASEAN countries, including three flights at a price of 399 US dollars for a five-day to one-month trip, with additional flights available for 150 US dollars each.

At least 157 hotels are involved in the programme, the agency previously ran in the third quarter of last year.

About 45 per cent of tourists visiting ASEAN countries are citizens from the member nations.

BR to procure 100 tank-wagons from China

DHAKA, 19 April — Bangladesh Railway (BR) will procure 100 tank-wagons from China at a cost of some 3.66 million US dollars for carrying petroleum products.

According to the official Bangladesh News Agency, BR Sunday signed an agreement here with a company from China’s Liaoning Province.

Since independence, Bangladesh Railway has declared 142 of its tank-wagons scrap. BR has replaced 31 of those scrapped wagons in 1979 and 25 in 1981.

BR at present has 492 metre-gauge fuel-carrying tank-wagons and 209 broad-gauge tank-wagons, some of which are being used for over 60 years against their stipulated longevity of 40 years. The new tank-wagons from China will facilitate the BR to reach petroleum products to different parts of the country particularly to northern Bangladesh.

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Uganda, Sudan sign cooperation agreement in agriculture

KAMPALA, 19 April — Uganda and Sudan have signed a framework cooperation agreement in agriculture, fisheries, animal resources and voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees, according to local newspaper Sunday Monitor which was published on Saturday.

The agreement and two other accords were signed here Friday at the end of the two-day meeting of the Uganda-Sudan Joint Ministerial Commission. Uganda Deputy Prime Minister Henry Kajura hailed the agreement as a step toward "renewal and reintegration" of the bilateral relations.

But the two sides did not arrive at agreement on the issues of security, immigration and trade, according to the newspaper.

Chinese universities hold education exhibition in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 19 April — The two-day China Education Exhibition 2004 kicked off here Saturday in a bid to provide information for the Nepali students willing to study in China.

As many as 26 universities from various parts of China, including the world-famous Qinghua University, Fudan University and Tongji University are participating in the exhibition, the second of its kind in the Himalayan kingdom.

The exhibition was jointly organized by the China Scholarship Council under the Chinese Education Ministry, the Chinese Embassy to Nepal and the Amiko Society of Nepal, a Sino-Nepali friendship organization.

The major objective of the exhibition is to impart first-hand knowledge and information to prospective Nepali students and their families about the Chinese education system, individual universities and courses they offer.

At the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Nepal Minister of Education and Sports Hari Bahadur Basnet said: "Nepal and China maintain friendly relationships in various fields, which can be further strengthened through this exhibition."

"China’s education system is at the international level, and it is suitable for Nepali students," Basnet noted. — MNA/Xinhua

China-made BMW 318I goes on sale

SHANGHAI, 19 April — The China-made BMW 318I made its debut on Saturday, announced the producer BMW Brilliance in the Chinese metropolis of Shanghai on Saturday.

The car is sold at 398,000 yuan (48,536 US dollars) nationwide, according to dealers. BMW Brilliance is a joint venture of BMW and Brilliance China Automotive set up in May 2003. Its production capability will reach 30,000 this year and its total investment will top 4.5 billion yuan (549 million US dollars) by 2005, according to the company.

Last year, BMW sold 18,700 cars on the Chinese Mainland, three times more than the previous year, according to China Economic Information Network. — MNA/Xinhua

Taj Mahal to host ozone meeting

NEW DELHI, 19 April — Facing threat from polluting industries in its vicinity, the 17th Century Mughal monument Taj Mahal in Agra will host an international conference to phase out ozone depleting substances (ODS), said the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Ozone officers from the South Asia and Southeast Asia Pacific Network (SA-SEAP) are due to meet from April 19 to 21 to share experience and explore the best approaches to phase out ODS, said the ministry.

"The choice of Agra as the venue for these crucial meetings will serve to bring to wider attention the problems of air pollution faced by the important heritage site of Taj Mahal. An issue that has drawn the attention of GoI, technical experts and the government for a number of years," said the ministry.

A total of 22 countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia and multilateral agencies will attend the meeting.

For the first time, Afghanis tan and Bhutan will participate in the meeting thought the two are not to be parties to the Montreal Protocol to control use of ozone depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFC).

— MNA/Xinhua

Two sections of new Yangtze River bridge conjoined

NANJING, 19 April — The two sections of Ranyang Bridge built from the two banks of the Yangtze River in east China’s Jiangsu Province were conjoined Saturday, which connects the cities of Zhenjiang and Yangzhou.

The bridge composed of north section and south section, with the full length of 35.66 kilometres. The construction of its kind is the largest in scale and the most advanced in technique among all Yangtze River bridges, according to the construction headquarters.

The construction began in October of 2000 with a total investment of 5.78 billion yuan (696 million US dollars). A total of four billion yuan (494 million US dollars) has been spent so far.

The north section completed construction in January of 2003. The ongoing south section is 1.490 kilometres in length and weighs 23,000 tons. The entire bridge is expected to open to traffic in the first halfyear of 2005, sources disclosed. — MNA/Xinhua

China to launch two satellites for scientific purpose

BEIJING, 19 April — China is ready to launch two satellites on April 18 and 20 for scientific purpose. The two satellites are launched in experimental I and Nasing II and will be carried by a Long March II C carrier rocket from the Xichang Space Launch Centre, according to experts with the Harbin Institute University and Tsinghua University.

The two satellites will be used for scientific purposes, including flight demonstration for developing small-sized satellites and observance of the Earth. The preparation was going smoothly, said the experts — MNA/Xinhua

WB official says poverty holds back Zambia’s economy

LUSAKA, 19 April — Poverty forms an obstacle to the improvement of economy in Zambia and it has hit women and children the hardest, World Bank representative in the country has said.

World Bank Country Representative Oshene Nyanain was quoted as saying by local newspaper Daily Mail on Saturday that a diversified and export-oriented economy would create an enabling environment for private investment development.

He observed that improving the economy was not the sole responsibility of government alone but for all Zambians.

The World Bank Board of Directors approved its Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Zambia in March to help fight poverty in the one of the poorest country in the world.

“Our new Country Assistance Strategy is built on an efficient and effectively managed public sector which would see improved governance and an overall effec- tiveness of public expendi- ture,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA MUTIARA VOY: NO (097)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MUTIARA Voy No (097) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-4-2004 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of a W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm upto Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
Phone: 2569098/378316/376797

DON’T SMOKE
At least 50 killed in Djibouti floods

NAIROBI, 19 April — At least 50 people have died and many more were missing in floods after torrential rains pounded Djibouti this week, aid workers said on Friday.

"We are feeling rather excited because it is a wonderful recovery especially as the film is the only film in which Valentino and Swanson starred together," he told Reuters.

The deceased collector, whose family van den Brink said did not want to be named, had a strange way of organizing his films, so it took the archive several years of searching through the reels to realize there was a full copy of "Beyond the Rocks." Van den Brink said the 81-minute romantic melodrama about a woman pushed into a marriage with an older man who falls for Valentino’s nobleman character on her honeymoon was in good condition apart from about two minutes which were damaged.

Dutch museum recovers long-lost 1922 Valentino film

AMSTERDAM, 19 April — The Dutch national film archive has discovered a complete copy of the long-lost 1922 silent classic “Beyond the Rocks” starring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson in a private collection, it said on Saturday.

"Film historians and restorers have been looking for ‘Beyond the Rocks’ — a classic melodrama about impossible love — for almost three quarters of a century," the Filmuseum, the Dutch national centre for cinematography, said in a statement.

Jan van den Brink, a film historian and Valentino expert, who works for the Filmuseum, said the 1922 hit film had turned up among over 2,000 film canisters bequeathed to the archive in 2000 after the death of a collector in the town of Haarlem.

"We are feeling rather excited because it is a wonderful recovery especially as the film is the only film in which Valentino and Swanson starred together," he told Reuters.

The deceased collector, whose family van den Brink said did not want to be named, had a strange way of organizing his films, so it took the archive several years of searching through the reels to realize there was a full copy of "Beyond the Rocks." Van den Brink said the 81-minute romantic melodrama about a woman pushed into a marriage with an older man who falls for Valentino’s nobleman character on her honeymoon was in good condition apart from about two minutes which were damaged.

Round-the-world trip of amphibious plane starts from Philippines

MANILA, 19 April — The Philippines on Friday became the starting point of an eight-month round-the-world voyage of an amphibious plane based on the designs of the classic Dornier flying boats of the 1930s and 1940s.

Ien Dornier, a grandson of the German aircraft designer Claude Dornier, piloted the three-engined Do24ATT and took off from the former Clark Air Base, north of Manila, the Philippine Daily Star on-line news quoted organizers of the tour as saying.

The aircraft, which will visit 47 countries, is scheduled to make stops at Dornier’s hometown by Lake Constance and the Hudson River in New York.

The Do24-ATT is based on a design initially built for the Dutch Government in 1937 which was once used for transport and sea rescues all over the world.

The new model, built in 1983 and equipped with modern technology and turbo-prop engines, was acquired by Philippine carrier Southeast Asian Airlines. The aircraft reportedly will be used by the airlines to fly tourists to Southeast Asian resorts after the trips end in Philippines in December.

Sources from Faridpur told Xinhua Saturday about a dozen people hit by the disease are now undergoing treatment at hospitals and clinics in the district.

This is the second spell of virus outbreak in the area, as at least 18 children were killed in the first spell at the end of January in three adjacent western districts neighboring Faridpur.

The Institute of Epidemiological Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has sent samples of blood, tissue and bone marrow from the patients to the Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta, and the result will come out in a few days.

The test result of the first spell identified the killer as a Nipah-like virus with fruits but castrates.

The difference in Faridpur this time, however, is that all the victims were of the age between 25 and 50, instead of almost all children in the previous outbreak.

The symptoms of the patients in Faridpur are also somewhat different from those of January’s infection, as respiratory problem has been added to the symptoms list other than high fever, unconsciousness, headache and vomiting tendency that were reported during the previous outbreak.

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Thai fruit gets thumbs up in Hong Kong

BANGKOK, 19 April — Fruit from Thailand has made a huge hit among the people of Hong Kong, many of whom are re-exporting Thai fruits to neighbouring countries.

The Thai News Agency quoted a report from the Hong Kong branch of the Office of International Trade Promotion as saying Friday that the topping market for Thai fruits in Hong Kong is durable, followed by rambutans, longans and mangoes.

Exports of lychees to Hong Kong, meanwhile, have averaged at around 284 million baht (7.28 million US dollars) per year over the past three years.

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Thai fruit gets thumbs up in Hong Kong

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Moscow launches Soviet-style spring clean

Moscow, 19 April — Hundreds of thousands of Muscovites turned out on Saturday to scrub, paint or sweep the Russian capital in the annual “subbotnik” or spring clean.

The Soviet Government started mobilizing ordinary citizens in 1991 to clean up after Russia’s perestroika.

The custom of giving up time one spring weekend to spruce up parks, streets and courtyards survived the fall of communism and, like many aspects of Soviet life, now has a sense of nostalgia. Even some Western companies now organize public-spirited cleaning days for their employees.

Saturday’s participants appeared to quite enjoy scrubbing Moscow, which is left covered with litter and mud when the snow melts after five months of fierce winter.

14 African migrants drown on way to Spain’s Canaries

MAKNU, 19 April — Fourteen African migrants drowned when their boat sank as they tried to reach Spain’s Canary Islands on Saturday, and a search was under way for a nine-month-old baby, police said.

Another boat reached shore, a spokesman for the Civil Guard police said, and a total of 66 migrants arrived safely in Fuerteventura, the most easterly of the islands.

They’ve picked up 14 bodies, the spokesman said, adding that the migrants were from sub-Saharan Africa.

They are still looking for a nine-month-old baby.

The Canary Islands are less than 125 miles off the coast of northwest Africa and each year thousands of would-be immigrants try to cross the Atlantic stretch in boats that are not seaworthy.

Some 500,000 illegal immigrants a year enter the European Union, according to European Commission estimates. Illegal immigrants detained in Spain are often deported to other countries of origin.

100 immigrants saved in stormy Mediterranean

ROTT, 19 April — A Turkish merchant ship has plucked 100 immigrants to safety in stormy seas, Italian Coast Guards said in a statement on Saturday.

The group of 82 men, 15 women and three children ran into trouble on Thursday as they headed across the Mediterranean in search of a better life in Europe. They raised the alarm via a mobile phone, but an initial search by Maltese rescue teams and NATO warships was called off because of bad weather.

However, Italian Coast Guards said the 40-foot boat was later spotted south of the Italian island of Lampedusa. A nearby Turkish ship was diverted to the area and picked up the last of the immigrants “in extremely severe weather” late on Friday. The ship then resumed its journey towards the Tunisian port of Sfax.
Bayern's titles almost gone

BERLIN, 19 April— Bayern Munich's slim hopes of retaining the Bundesliga title almost vanished with a 2-0 defeat at arch-rivals Borussia Dortmund on Saturday.

Dortmund, second-placed champions, who were already two goals down when they had playmaker Michael Ballack sent off for a second booking in the 68th minute, stay seven points behind leaders Werder Bremen.

Bayern will find it tough to catch the northerners, who will move 10 points clear with five matches left if they beat Hanover 96 on Sunday.

Brazilian striker Ewerthon put Dortmund in the lead against the run of play by converting a debatable penalty in the 55th minute.

German defender Christian Wörns completed the victory when he volleyed home in the 85th minute.

The visitors then collapsed and the Bayern players started looking nervous, particularly Ballack, who had already been booked for contesting a refereeing decision when they were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Deportivo Marítimo suffered until the penalty, awarded for a challenge on striker Salvatore Gambino by Box-keeper defender Hasan Salhahmideh, which looked fair from television replays.

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THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  Tuesday, 20 April, 2004  15

WEATHER

Monday, 19 April, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:

During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in lower Sagaing Division, Kachin and Shan States, scattered in Chin State, upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, isolated in Kayah State and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were (2.48) inches in PyinOoLwin, (1.23) inches in Dala, (1.46) inches in Kale and (1.42) inches in Hakha. Day temperatures were (15°C) to (18°C) below normal in upper Sagaing Division, Kachin and Northern Shan States, (5°C) to (7°C) above normal in Tanintharyi and Ayeyarwady Divisions, (1°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kayin and Yangon Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

Minimum temperature on 18-4-2004 was 39.0°C (102°F). Minimum temperature on 19-4-2004 was 23.0°C (73°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 19-4-2004 was 66%. Total sunshine hours on 18-4-2004 was (9.8) hours approx. Rainfall on 19-4-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Mandalay. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 5 mm (0.20 inch) at Yangon Airport and 12 mm (0.47 inch) at Kaba-Aye and 3 mm (0.12 inch) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed 24-hour period at 18-4-2004 was 20 knots.

Weather forecast for 20-4-2004: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in upper Sagaing, Kachin and Chin States, isolated in Rakhine and Shan States, lower Sagaing, Megway, Mandalay, Ayeawady and Tanintharyi Divisions. Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%). State of the sea: Seas will be modertate in lower Sagaing waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in upper Myanmar as at 20-4-2004. Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 20-4-2004: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershers. Degree of certainty is (40%). Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas as at 20-4-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Tuesday, April 20

View today:

7:00 am
8:00 am
9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am
12:00 noon
1:00 pm
2:00 pm
3:00 pm
4:00 pm
5:00 pm
6:00 pm
7:00 pm
8:00 pm
9:00 pm
10:00 pm
11:00 pm
12:00 midnight

Weather:

8:10 am
8:20 am
8:30 am
9:00 am
9:30 am
10:00 am
10:30 am
11:00 am
11:30 am
12:00 noon
12:30 noon
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1:30 pm
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7:30 pm
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9:30 pm
10:00 pm
10:30 pm
11:00 pm
12:00 midnight

Tune in today:

8:30 am
8:40 am
8:50 am
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12:00 midnight

12:15 midnight
Review meeting on accomplishment of WTP Construction

Work Committee held

YANGON, 19 April — A meeting to review the accomplishments of Water Treatment Plant Construction Work Committee of Yangon City Development Committee was held at the City Hall of YCDC this evening. Chairman of the Water Treatment Plant Construction Work Committee Chairman of YCDC Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin made a speech on the occasion. Present on the occasion were Secretary of the Water Treatment Plant Construction Work Committee Joint-Secretary of the YCDC U Kyi Win, officials of Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, Myanmar Port Authority, Health Department, Yangon East District Peace and Development Council, Engineering Department of YCDC (Water and Sewage) and Departments concerned. First, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin gave instructions on measures to be taken for construction of the plant to meet the set standard and continuous supervision by officials concerned for timely completion. Next, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin heard reports on undertakings for the plant to be established, gathering of necessary materials and progress of work presented by Joint-Secretary of Water Treatment Plant Construction Work Committee Dr Tun Than Tun. Joint-Secretary of YCDC U Kyi Win gave supplementary reports. 

Commander inspects poultry farms

YANGON, 19 April — A coordination meeting on organizing the Fourth World Buddhist Summit held at Wizaya Mingala Hall on this evening. Chairman of the work committee for organizing the Fourth World Buddhist Summit to meet the international standard was held at Wizaya Mingala Hall, chairman of the summit. The commander arrived at the No-1 poultry farm in Sawbwaygyon in Insein Township, and the commander gave instructions on sale of eggs and chicken at tax-free markets and other markets. The commander and party inspected production of 5,000 briquette a day, raising of chicken, boosting production, measures for sanitation and growing of seasonal crops.

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